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But the great point would be gained. Our criminal population, debarred from making war on society, would as a body be driven to industrial pursuits, and to the support of law and order as indispensable to their own well being—to their existence, in fact.

In a less favored climate, but in a climate with abundant natural resources and fitted to the development of a hardy and vigorous race, I see no reason to doubt that the proposal I have pointed out, if carried into action, would result in the rapid development of the natural resources of Alaska, and of a very considerable commerce between it and the United States.

The benefit would be only temporary. As the descendants of the early colonists rise in the industrial and social scale, they will protest against their country being made a dumping-ground for convicts. But the problems of to-day are for our solution : our children must solve the problems of the future, as they arise.

In a certain sense the measure here proposed may be regarded as experimental. It will not be disputed that self-interest is the mainspring of human conduct, and I think there is little reasonable ground to doubt that under the conditions I have prescribed the majority would range themselves on the side of law and order at the dictates of self interest. That the society would not be Utopian I am quite ready to believe. The criminal class would, perhaps, be large in comparison with the criminal classes of other States of the Union, and the general tone of the society low, but the great end would be achieved, a large criminal population now preying on society would be rendered self supporting.

One condition not yet touched on is indispensable to success. There must be some approach to equality of the sexes. The axiom that he who marries gives hostages to fortune would hold good here as elsewhere.

To make Alaska a convict settlement of the Tasmanian type, as has been recently proposed, would be a retrograde step. The costs of establishment and maintenance of such a settlement or settlements would be enormous ; and, if we consider only the protection of society and the reformation of the criminal, the plea for the adoption of the proposal must rest on the assumption that a few years of slavery is a necessary preparation for free colonization.

This assumption is, of course, untenable. If the criminal classes are to be rendered industrial and law-abiding, it is only by environing them with conditions which render it evidently to their interest to be so. The proposal here outlined commends itself as humane and economic, and, if I have rightly indicated the mainspring of human action, it is no less scientific.

C. F. AMERY.

IV.

GENERAL POPE AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

IN the REVIEW for June, General John Pope calls attention to the fact that, at the close of our Civil War which was calculated to bring to the front the great, heroic, predominating spirits of the time, the President and Vice-President, Chief Justice, all the cabinet officers, the Speaker of the House, the first and second generals of the victorious Union Army, and the Admiral of the Navy,—in short every prominent Government official, civil and military, were Western men ; and the further fact that during the same period New England produced neither a great general nor a statesman of commanding influence. These facts are remarkable, but the conclusion drawn therefrom by General Pope is still more so. He suggests “with much diffidence,” that the public school system may be looked to for a clue to “so strange a fact.” The clue is, that uniformity in methods and sameness of books have a tendency to

educate up, and down to, a dead level mediocrity, and to suppress individuality and the effort and success that characterize and accompany it.

But does not General Pope overlook one of the plainest and most oft-repeated lessons of history? In the time of the Revolutionary War New England produced her full quota of great soldiers and able statesmen. That portion of our country was then in a condition favorable to the development of hardy, adventurous spirits, who naturally take positions of leadership in troublous times. The hunter and pioneer is a soldier ready-made, who only needs to hear the tocsin of war, to turn from the defense of his cabin against wild animals and wilder savages, to the defense of his country against an armed foe. At the beginning of the present century New England entered upon another stage of development and progress,—the era of letters, arts, and culture. Since then it has been her province to produce scholars, poets, artists, and *literati*. When asked for her soldiers and statesmen, she can point to her Longfellows, Emersons, Lowells, Holmeses, and Steadmans, and say, "these are my heroes, my soldiers of peace, my statesmen of light." At the time of our Civil War the West was the frontier, the new home of the pioneer,—the hunter-soldier. Life there held out inducements to the adventurous sons of the East, and fed the spirit of enterprise and daring they carried thither. There every condition was favorable to the production of soldiers, and they were produced, which, according to the evolutionists, is a way nature has of doing things.

Do you hear the sound of a great tidal wave that is sweeping up from the South and lapping the classic shores of Massachusetts Bay? It is the revival of Southern literature. The South stands now where the East did when Bryant wrote his "Thanatopsis;" when Longfellow was writing poems at one dollar apiece; when the "Autocrat" first took his seat at that "Breakfast Table," the crumbs from which young Texans feast upon to this day.

Is it necessary to speak, through the pages of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, in behalf of public free schools—the schools of the people? Back a quarter of a century I see a lad, scarce ten years of age, not on his way to school, but following the plow. I look into his soul and see that it is starving. With a universe of mystery round him, ages of legendary lore behind him, and the Pierien springs in front, and yet he cannot slake his undying thirst because he is chained, Tantalus-like, to the rock of Ignorance, guarded by the dragon Poverty. In memory of that boy, in behalf of every son and daughter of toil and poverty in this broad land, I appeal to the wealth and culture, to the patriotism and statesmanship of America for public free schools, with compulsory attendance for at least four months in the year.

W. T. S. KELLER.